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Title of the Thesis:

TOURISM RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT: A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY IN THE RARH REGION OF WEST BENGAL

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

Tourism involves the movement of people through time and space either between their areas of origin and destination or within destination areas (McKercher and Lew, 2004). Tourism is one of the major economic activities of the modern world absorbing large numbers of educated, unemployed men and women throughout the world particularly during tourist season. As per the estimates of London based World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), tourism has generated $121 billion i.e. 6.4% of India's GDP in the year 2011. Being a significant export earner in the economy of India, it was responsible for the generation of 39.3 million jobs i.e. 7.9% of its total employment. In its association, the GDP of tourism sector has expanded 229% in between years from 1990 to 2010 (WTTC, 2012).

There is close relationship between heritage and tourism since most of the places with cultural and natural heritage attract visitors on the basis of which Heritage Tourism has been flourished in the modern world. According to the Michigan State University's Heritage Tourism Initiative Core Team (HTICT), Heritage tourism encompasses elements of living culture, history, and natural history of place that communities value and steward for the future. These elements are very specific to a community or region and can contribute to pride, stability, growth, and economic development. Heritage tourism is a new perspective to look at tourism planning more comprehensively and this particular type of Tourism initiatives is an active, engaging, and ongoing process that involves the local community residents, organizations, civic institutions and governments working together and in symbiotic manner.

With the growth of tourism, there arise a number of challenges to the preservation of archaeological tourism destinations and consequently mass tourism is identified by a number of critics as a bane regarding the survival of existing archaeological remains of our civilization. But for the third world countries where fund constraints in conservation is a problem, tourism can provide adequate resources for the preservation and maintenance of archaeological and heritage sites. Under such circumstances, the only option is to promote sustainable tourism in such a way that economy and heritage conservation may proceed hand in hand.

Tourism can be divided into two broad categories, viz. (1) mass tourism (2) sustainable tourism/eco-tourism. The unplanned and irresponsible tourism development leads to mass tourism while sustainable tourism or eco-tourism is environmental friendly tourism that has been carefully planned and managed. Sustainable tourism also stays alert on the issues of carrying capacity aspects of the tourism destination. Carrying capacity is that particular threshold limit beyond which the tourism activity of an area becomes unsustainable. The longevity and the sustenance of tourism rely on the environmental sustainability.

The unsustainable way of tourism development reveals its negative impact in terms of loss of biodiversity, deforestation, congested settlements, land use alterations, pollution of air, water and soil, siltation of water bodies, loss of wetlands, loss of land, social alienation, change in lifestyle and traditions etc.

The sustainable tourism or eco-tourism not only revitalizes the physical environment of the tourist destination but also exerts its influence on social economic and cultural aspects. It promotes cross-cultural contacts with increasing participation of local communities in

tourism development, which can contribute to a better understanding and increasing interest in the preservation of cultural heritage and the revival of traditional crafts and ceremonies.

Tourism development in an area invariably leads to economic growth of that area. The economic growth is manifested in terms of increase in income, poverty alleviation, employment opportunities, infrastructural growth, improvement of the standards of living etc. Fortunately tourism has a variety of economic impacts. Tourism contributes to sales, profits, jobs, tax revenues and income of the area. There are three effective areas where the role of tourism is vital for economy- Direct, Indirect and Induced effect.

- The direct effects occur within the primary tourism sector- lodging, food and beverage industry, transportation, amusements and retail trade.
- The indirect effects occur when tourism affects various sectors of economy viz. industries supplying products and services to hotels.
- The induced effect on tourism activity normally focuses on changes in sales, income and employment in a region resulting from tourism activity.

Regarding tourism and economy, the relations are depending on the multiplier spin-off effects. Multipliers represent the economic interdependencies between sectors within a particular region's economy. There are three types of multipliers associated with tourism (Lea, 1998).

- Employment multiplier - generated by additional expenditure.
- Sales and Output multiplier – measuring the amount of total sale and output stimulated by initial tourist expenditure.
- Income multiplier

Leakages reduce the economic gains of the host community. Leakages simply mean the outflow of money from the host community of the tourist destination.

Tourism appears as a tool for backward area development due to its multiplier effects. A backward area where neither agriculture nor industry is very much developed but it has been endowed with tourism resources, and thus with the help of tourism, the backward area gains the much needed economic vitality.

The following research questions have been formed which may be useful in deciding the type and nature of data to be collected.

1. What is the present status of existing tourism resources present in Rarh region?
2. How the guests respond on available tourism facilities and amenities in the study region?
3. Why the tourism development in the region is suffering from a number of bottlenecks?
4. Which may be the appropriate sustainable tourism options very much applicable for the region?

OBJECTIVES:

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore various types of tourism resources spread across Rarh region along with their assessment and mapping.
- To evaluate of the quality of existing infrastructure available for tourism in the region.
- To analyze the existing problems of the popular and potential tourism destinations.
- To plan suitable alternatives to promote sustainability in tourism sector

DATABASE AND METHOD:

Relevant data have been collected from both the secondary and primary sources. Secondary data have been collected mainly from published Government reports, documents and relevant publications of different NGOs. Primary data have been collected mainly from field survey.

Different government offices and departments like Census of India (Government of India), The Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics (Government of West Bengal) provides a large content of data on both town and village level information. Besides that, different other organizations like Natural Resources Data Management System (NRDMS), National Atlas Thematic Mapping Organization (NATMO), and Survey of India (SOI), State Institute of Panchayats and Rural Development (SIPRD), Government of West Bengal, Kalyani, Nadia District, The National Library, Kolkata etc. have important data, information and maps on various aspects of the study area in soft copy (on their respective websites) and hard copy. But there is dearth of data on tourism related aspects. The tourist inflow data is only available

for some selected few destinations. The information regarding hotels and lodges are not also readily available from the respective authority. Under such circumstances, the scholar had to depend on the primary surveys.

Special emphasis has been given on collecting primary data to identify the attributes of tourist satisfaction, characteristics of tourists, their behavior pattern, impact on souvenir industry etc. For the purpose of collecting primary data, questionnaire survey had been conducted through interview, field visits and participant observations in various tourist places of Rarh.

Different statistical analysis both Qualitative and quantitative, have been done to fulfill the aforementioned objectives and answer the research questions. The IBM SPSS Software (Latest Version) have been used to tabulate and analyze the data collected from extensive field survey and host and guest interview. To examine tourists' satisfaction and to understand the Hosts' perception on the negativity of tourism in different popular tourism destinations , Principal Component Analysis (PCA) were performed which answers the research question number 2 and 3

Principal component method was used as it holds most of the variations and co-variations in multivariate data through a new and reduced combinations of the original variables maintaining key objectives of data reduction and interpretation. The principal components were extracted so that the first few principal components accounted for a large fraction of the total variation in the data. The factor analysis was done by the following procedure: (i) an inter-variable correlation coefficient matrix was derived. (ii) The Factor was extracted by adopting the following criteria: (a) the minimum variance for extracting was 0.40 (b) The Factor rotation procedure was Varimax and (c) The type of Factor analysis is exploratory (Thompson, 2004).

A combined methodology of **SWOT-AHP** (SWOT- Strength, Weakness, Opportunity & Threat and AHP- Analytic Hierarchy Process) has been performed(after Saaty, 1990) to identify the most significant factors influencing destination environment and to answer research Question number 3 (Why the tourism development in the region is suffering from a number of bottlenecks?).

SWOT – AHP Model is a hybrid method of strategic planning where quantitative as well as qualitative, both sides are taken into consideration. It may be used as an effective tool for situational assessment and to identify significant factors before recommending any strategic planning. At first the key SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) factors

which affect sustainable tourism development in Rarh Bengal were identified based on the feedbacks on structured questionnaires and discussion with industry stakeholders. In the next stage, the AHP (Analytic Hierarchy Process after Saaty, 1980) is conceptualised within SWOT analysis. It involves the hierarchical construction of SWOT matrix where each factors are subjected to pair – wise comparison through focus group survey. This multiple pair – wise comparisons are based on the nine – point scale of relative importance which can be shown by a square or reciprocal matrix. Each matrix are then normalized and prioritized. Consistency analysis is performed to test whether the judgements are consistent or not, if inconsistent need reassessment.

Digital and analogue cartographic techniques have been used to present relevant information. Various types of maps have been generated to fulfill the objectives of research. With the help of TNT Mips software and Arc GIS 9.1, various maps have been drawn. GPS (Global Positioning System) survey has been conducted for the preparation and updation of necessary maps. For this purpose, Google Earth images and available CARTOSAT-I image were used. The present work has been materialized by integrating the conventional and modern techniques for spatial analysis.

SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The Rarh region is situated in between the extensive Chota Nagpur Plateau on the west and the River Ganges in the east. This plain mostly comprises the lower Gangetic plains to the south of the Ganges, and to the west of one of its major distributaries: Bhagirathi-Hooghly River. Professor K. Bagchi and Professor K. N. Mukherjee (1980), noted geographers and writer of the renowned publication 'Diagnostic Survey of Rarh Bengal (Part -II)' referred this region as the 'Trans-Bhagirathi West Bengal'. The Rarh region ($21^0 30' 26''$ N to $24^0 54' 14''$ N latitude and $85^0 58' 48''$ E to $88^0 30' 10''$ E longitude) is currently spread over eleven south-western districts namely Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Purba Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura, Paschim Barddhaman, Purba Barddhaman, Haora, Hugli, Birbhum and parts of (western) Murshidabad. It is constituted of 147 police stations, 175 depressed and backward Blocks and 27,011 Villages. Generally, the Rarh region may be divided into two parts: Northern Rarh and Southern Rarh. River Damodar is acting as the boundary between these two regions. The Northern Rarh includes Birbhum district, parts of Murshidabad district, Paschim Bardhaman and Purba Bardhaman while the Southern Rarh includes most of the districts namely Purulia, Bankura, Haora, Hugli, Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram and Purba Medinipur.

The lateritic terrain of the Rarh region is not very much conducive for agriculture. Besides, there is little industrial development in the region which along with the insufficient agricultural development has made this region economically backward. Nearly 40% of the families live below poverty level (www.pupwb.org) but on a positive note, the area is extremely well endowed with tourism resources. The present researcher has selected the Rarh region of West Bengal as the study area because this region, with a large number of different types of diversified and attractive tourism destinations is a very interesting case to study the different aspects of geography, environment and economy with special reference to sustainable tourism development.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Literature review is important from three main perspectives. Firstly, it is helpful to identify or justify a particular researchable problem; secondly, existing literature can identify the research gap, on which the research is going to be conducted; and finally it proves to be helpful for concept generalization and understand the trend of a particular field of discussion.

The present study has been completed by going through and reviewing a large number of books, and journals, periodicals, reports issued by different governmental and non-governmental organizations. Thematic and as well as areal proximity to the proposed research theme were given the utmost importance while reviewing literature.

The seminal book by McKercher, B. and Lew, A.A. (2004) named "A Companion to Tourism" has covered nearly every aspects of tourism and its different facets. Mill, R.C. and Morrison, A.M. (1985) in their book "The Tourism System: An introductory Text" has thoroughly described the nature of tourism, its different types, effects, sustainability and management issues. The World Tourism and Travel Council popularly known as WTTC (2012) in one of their publication "India: How does travel and tourism compares to other sectors?" has successfully presented the modern day tourism scenario of India with relevant data. Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (1998) in "Tourism and Sustainability: New Tourism in the Third World" has elaborated and highlighted the sustainability issues associated with modern day tourism scenario. William, S. (1998) in his "Tourism Geography" has discussed the major details of tourism activities, its different characteristics and most importantly, the relation between tourism and spatial science. Douglas G. Pearce, one of the most celebrated tourism geographers in his magnum opus Tourism Today: A Geographical Perspective (published in 1995), has focused on the spatial interactions which arises out of tourist movement from the tourist origin area to the destination areas. He is considered to be the

scholar who laid the foundation of tourism geography. He identified four types of model-model of tourist travel, model of origin and destination, structural model and evolutionary model. Pearce throughout the book indicates the value of various models and approaches to the spatial analysis of tourism. Richard Butler, one of the most influential tourism geographers ever has proposed a widely noted model named Tourist Area Life Cycle Model in 1980. In the model, Butler proposed that every tourist destination has a life cycle: from its discovery to declination and the destination evolves through a number of mutually exclusive phases.

Mitchell and Murphy jointly published a pioneering research article entitled 'Geography and Tourism' in Annals of Tourism Research (vol. 18), an esteemed journal in the year 1991 where they examined physical and cultural environments from systematic and regional perspectives to perceive evolutionary changes in and on the touristscape. R. C. Mill and A. M. Morrison (1984) in 'The Tourism System: An Introductory Text' have shed light on the different important microeconomic factors of tourism e.g. demand and supply and tried to identify the motivations behind tourism and recreation. In, 'The Geography of Travel and Tourism' penned by Brian G. Boniface and Christopher P. Cooper (1987), focus has been given on terms like leisure, recreation and tourism along with the analysis of important elements of tourism activities. S.C. Joshi (1983) in "Kumaun Himalaya: A Geographical Perspective on Resource Development" emphasized the different facts and facets of nature based tourism. S.K. Singh and P. Nag (1999) in their title "Tourism and Trekking in Nainital Region" gave detail account of the tourism and recreation activities in and around Nainital region. M.P. Bezbaruah (1999) investigated the pros and cons of expansion of tourism and recreational activities in rural areas in the form of agritourism in his article "Tourism: Current Scenario and Future Prospects. D.K. Giri (2000) in his article "Tourism in Rural India" published in Kurukshetra, a journal of rural development, explored and expressed a Marxian view of rural development through the development of tourism. Pran Nath Seth and Sushma Seth Bhat (2002) wrote a text book entitled 'An Introduction to Travel and Tourism' where they briefly described different aspects of tourism industry in India with respect to global scenario. Veena Tewari Nandi and R. Kumar (2013) in their publication entitled 'Tourism, Climate Change and Sustainability' have highlighted the effect of climate change on tourism industry and the role tourism play to induce climate change. Shashi Prabha Sharma (2006) gives detailed information on tourism development, its positive effect and consequences in his book "Tourism and Environment". Prakash Talwar (Vol-1, 2006) in his book "Travel and Tourism Management" and V. Binmunda Dhulasi (1983) in his book "Environmental

Challenges towards Tourism" describes the concept of tourism development and its environmental aspects. The economical aspects of tourism development are finely described in the book "Tourism and Society" by **Shalini Modi** (2001).

The information about the Western districts i.e. Birbhum, Barddhaman, Purulia, Bankura and Paschim Medinipur districts are elaborately described in the book "Birbhum Zilla Sankha", "Barddhaman Zilla Sankha", "Purulia Zilla Sankha", "Bankura Zilla Sankha" and "Medinipur Zila Sankha" respectively published by the Government of West Bengal (January, 2004). "Bengal District Gazetters: Midnapore", "Bengal District Gazetters: Birbhum", "Bengal District Gazetters: Bankura", by L. S. S. O'Malley (1911) are some another important books that provides a huge information about the districts. "Paschim Banger Sanskriti, Vol I-IV" by B. Ghosh (2010) are very useful and informative and have detailed descriptions on the important places of the districts.

D. McCutchion, (2004), in his seminal work "Late Medieval Temples of Bengal" which was published from the Asiatic Society, has described and listed hundreds of heritage buildings, temples, mosque etc with minute details. Shashi Prabha Sharma (2006) gives detailed information on tourism development, its positive effect and consequences in his book "Tourism and Environment". Prakash Talwar (Vol-1, 2006) in his book "Travel and Tourism Management" and V. Binmunda Dhulasi (1983) in his book "Environmental Challenges towards Tourism" describes the concept of tourism development and its environmental aspects. The economical aspects of tourism development are finely described in the book "Tourism and Society" by Shalini Modi (2001) and "Economic significance of Tourism" by Lea (1998).

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RELEVANCY OF THE THEME:

The theme of the present study is very relevant because tourism is the fastest growing industry of the modern globalized world and it may play a vital role in developing an backward area such as the Rarh region of West Bengal which is endowed with ample tourism resources. Though many efforts have been made to assess the impact of flourishing tourism industry on the economy of India but a geographical study on the popular and potential tourism resources of Rarh region of West Bengal is not common at all. To fully understand the scope and relevance of the present topic, a thorough study on the tourism resources of Rarh Region is needed. The tourism resources of the study area can be classified as follows-

A. Nature Based Tourism Resources:

Sl. No.	Name of the Tourist place	District	Significance
1.	Garbeta	Paschim Medinipur	In Garhbeta (50 km from Kharagpur) there is a bad-land topography, one of the battlefield of Chuar Rebellion in Rarh Bengal which is now a very popular picnic spot. Sarbamangala temple of Garhbeta made in the Odishan Rekhdeul style is a renowned religious centre that attracts devotees all over the year. The remains of Raikota fort of the Rajputs is another attraction of the place. But Garhbeta is classified as nature tourism site because of its landscape at Gangani area widely utilized by the film industry for outdoor shooting purpose.
2.	Hatibari	Paschim Medinipur	Hatibari (38 km from Jhargram), on the bank of river Subarnarekha offers outstanding scenic beauty. Boating on Subarnarekha may be considered as an added attraction.
3.	Tapaban	Paschim Medinipur	Tapaban (adjacent to Rameshwar temple) in Nayagram is a forest of mythological importance. It is believed to be the seat of the hermitage of Balmiki, the Puranic sect where according to legend, Devi Sita, the heroine of the great Indian epic Ramayana took her shelter. There is a small temple wherein the idols of Devi Sita with her children Laba and Kusha along with Balmiki are worshipped. Introduction of trekking (11 km) from Rameshwar temple to this temple within the forest ensuring the tourist safety may increase the appeal of this circuit.
4.	Mukutmanipur	Bankura	Mukutmanipur is very famous for its water reservoir which was initially made for the irrigation and flood control purposes. It is now a popular tourist place with a numbers of hotels and lodges and other amenities. Star category resort is runned by a private entrepreneur since 1990s in this place. Accommodations for visitors from various backgrounds and motives are already available in Mukutmanipur both in government and non government level.
5.	Sutan	Bankura	Sutan eco-park in Sutan (12 km from Mukutmanipur) is well known for its magnificent and picturesque settings with the sal forest and a beautiful lake. This park was inaugurated with trekkers hut, tent pad, boating facilities and a deer park but almost destroyed during Maoist movement
6.	Kuilapal	Purulia	Kuilapal (11 km from Talberia dam) is a forested area in the Banduan block of Purulia which attracts many tourists throughout the year with its beautiful nature park.

7.	Talberia	Bankura	Talberia dam (10 km from Sutan) is a small but beautiful water reservoir surrounded by dense forest considered to be a potential tourist destination. In winter, it is the place to observe the migratory birds.
8.	Jhilimili	Paschim Medinipur	About 7 km from Kuilapal, Jhilimili of Bankura district is a place for rest and relaxation in the lap of nature.
9.	Kankrajhor	Jhargram	Kankrajhor (20 km from Talberia) is renowned for its hilly station, sylvan forest, streams, cascades and wildlife. Many wild beers, deers etc can be seen here. Before the insurgency in Jangalmahal, the place was regarded as a nature tourism paradise.
10.	Ghagra	Jhargram	A place (22 km from Kankrajhor) with beautiful scenic landscape is another natural spot easier to visit. Kankrajhor is still not very much accessible from safety and security standpoints. With the promotion of tourism in this circuit, the situation is expected to be changed if community involvement in tourism is possible.
11.	Matha	Purulia	Matha hill (10 km from Balarampur) is renowned for its scenic beauty. Rock climbing camps are organised centring Matha. Pakhipahar is created by the artists curving the rocks in one of its hill which is a well known tourist attraction.
12.	Ayodhya hill	Purulia	Ayodhya (2220 ft), 12 km from Murguma is the crown of the tourist places in this region with its forests and a numbers of beautiful fresh water springs such as Bamni falls, Tugga falls etc. With Japanese cooperation, there developed a hydel power project which also attracts the visitors.
13.	Murguma	Purulia	Murguma (42 km from Balarampur) is a potential base station with adequate land around its water reservoir may be useful for recreational purposes. Murguma is proposed as a base station to diversify the tourism economy in the extreme western part of the district as well as to avoid the pressure on Ayodhya hills from the standpoint of carrying capacity issues. Located on the plain with outstanding natural beauty, Murguma is the alternative accommodation of Ayodhya hills suitable in market context.
14.	Garhpancha kot	Purulia	Garhpanchakot about 8 km from Telkupi, located at the foothills of Panchakot hills is developed by forest department as an ecotourism destination. This is also a heritage place with ruins of architectures built by the Panchakot royal family.
15.	Joychandi Pahar	Purulia	Joychandi hill, 4 km from Raghunathpur is another place for rock climbing. It was selected by Satyajit Ray for making of 'Hirak Rajar Deshe', a famous Bengali film of international reputation. It is regarded as a very good outdoor location for film industry which consequently advertises for its potential as a tourist place.

16.	Sahebbandh	Purulia	Sahebbandh in Purulia town, a wetland accommodating migratory birds is the attraction which draws many visitors. A plan for Rs 22 Crore has recently taken for beautification of this wetland and introduction of boating facility.
17.	Biharinath hill	Bankura	Biharinath hill (28 km from Chatna) with a height of 1449 ft is located in the Saltora block. Some temples with stone carvings of historical significance are found on the hill top. It is to be considered as a natural as well as heritage tourism site.
18.	Susunia hill	Bankura	Susunia hill (12 km from Chatna) is a popular natural, religious, historical, rock climbing and trekking place drawing a considerable number of tourists between October and March every year.
19.	Koro hill	Bankura	Koro hill (31 km from Chatna) with a height of 122 m is a potential tourist spot for its natural beauty which is also known for its Sabitri Devi temple. The hill and its surroundings are considered as good for sightseeing purpose.
20.	Deul Park	Paschim Barddhaman	Deul is situated on the bank of river Ajay at the Barddhaman district. This place is known for the presence of a beautiful nature park with accommodation facility for the visitors.
21.	Maithan	Paschim Barddhaman	At about 20 km from Asansol in Salanpur of Barddhaman district, Maithan is one of the most popular nature based tourist destination in this district with a beautiful water reservoir. The magnificent scenario attracts hundreds of tourists throughout the year who enjoy the boating facility in the reservoir
22.	Nachan	Purba Barddhaman	Very close to Durgapur, this place is known for its Bird Sanctuary where migrated birds from Siberia and other distant place gather in the winter every year.

B. Historical and Archaeological Tourism resources:

Sl. No.	Name of the Tourist place	District	Significance
1.	Bishnupur	Bankura	Bishnupur was the ancient capital of Mallabhum which has got its name from the Malla dynasty, who once ruled this region from 694- 1802 AD (Mitra, 2009) and is remembered for their patronage of art and culture. They had built some of the most beautiful late medieval temples of Bengal between the 17th - 18th centuries. Each and every temple in this

			place bears the signature of excellent craftsmanship and intricate carvings. There are all over 32 temples in Bishnupur made following different intricate styles such as Deul, Chala, Ratna etc. The major temples are: Rasmancha, Pancha Ratna Temple, Madanmohan Temple, Lalji Temple, Radhya Shyam temple, Nandalal Temple, Kalachand temple, Radhavinod Temple, Madangopal Temple, Murulimohan Temple, Radha Govinda Temple, Radha Madhab Temple, Chhinnamasta Temple, Malleswar temple, Mrinmayee Temple, Krishna-Valaram Temple etc.
2.	Santinike-tan	Birbhum	A place of significance regarding modern history and culture of India, Santiniketan is attracting visitors throughout the year. Initiated by Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath, Santiniketan became the centre of Indian intellect of early and mid 19th century. The museum at Rabindra Bhavan in Uttaryan complex where Tagore lived and guests like Gandhiji, Neheruji, and others were accommodated represents the glorious history of the place which is now serving the nation as a Central University, recognized as a centre of advanced of learning with its extraordinary departments like Kala Bhavan (painting and sculpture), Sangeet Bhavan (music), Agriculture and Rural Development (in Sriniketan).
3.	Paresnath	Bankura	On the 7 km north-west of Ranibandh, Bankura, is Paresnath, a small village considered to be an important Jain shrine of Bengal, is situated. The archaeological findings support the fact that Paresnath belongs to the 12-13th century. There are a number of brick built temples with numerous stone figures of Jain Tirthankars which are now protected by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI).
4.	Jhargram	Jhargram	Jhargram is well known for its natural beauty and tribal culture. The tourist attraction in Jhargram includes the Jhargram Raj Palace, Sabitri Devi temple, Deer Park etc. A part of Jhargram palace is converted into a heritage hotel.
5.	Medinipur Town	Paschim Medinipur	The Medinipur town has many archaeological and heritage sites such as: • 'Kali Temple' of Natunbazar (panchanaratna temple). • Holi tomb of 'Pin Lohani Baba' (Built in 16th century). • 'Jaganath Temple' of Natunbazar (built in 1851). • 'Sitala Mandir' of Barabazar is also notable for its antiquity. • 'Radhakantajiu Temple' (notable for its terracotta artistry). • The tomb of John Pears in Judges. • St. John Church at Seikhpura. • Roman Catholic of Keranitola. • Bapist Mision Church of America (near Abasgarh). • 'Jora Masjid' (twin mosque) of Minza Mahalla area.

6.	Dihar	Bankura	The Saileswar Temple
7.	Malancha	Paschim Medinipur	Malancha is famous for its temples. Some of them are: • 'Dakshina Kali Mandir' (Brick-built and Atchala formation and also terracotta ornamentation) built in 1634. • 'Nandeswar Shiv Temple' (built with laterite in 1719). • 'Siddheswari Mandir'. • 'Balaji Mandir'. • The temple of 'Kharageswar Mahadev'.
8.	Jagannathpur	Bankura	Temple of Ratneswar
9.	Bahulara	Bankura	A century old Saiva temple
10.	Moghal mari	Paschim Medinipur	Danton in West Medinipur is the site of Moghalmari Buddhist Vihar of 6th century AD on the Kharagpur-Odisha route, 160 km from Kolkata. Structural evidences of two Buddhist monasteries are already excavated and further excavations are going on in the site which represents a bright future of the area to be incorporated in Buddhist tourism circuit. Among the objects excavated a museum is planned to exhibit a figure of Buddha, a gold pendant, mixed metal coins of Samachardeva, objects of semi-precious stones, terracotta plaque and seats.
11.	Pathra	Paschim Medinipur	Pathra (25 km from Kharagpur) on the bank of river Kangsabati is a village with cluster of temples. Archaeological remains of folk architecture within natural surroundings incorporate the place in the tourism circuit. Among the cluster of century old temples, some important are: Nabaratna temple, Pancharatna temple, Dalan temple, Rasmancha, Kachari bari etc
12.	Gopiballa-vpur	Paschim Medinipur	About 11 km from Hatibari, Gopiballavpur is the seat of Vaishnavaism in Rarh Bengal where Dandamahatsav is celebrated every year in the month of May with the assemblage of a large number of devotees. The historical Nabaratna temple of Gopiballavpur is the manifestation of the cultural relationship between Odisha and Bengal in the field of religion and culture.
13.	Nayagram	Paschim Medinipur	Rameshwar temple in Nayagram (22 km from Gopiballavpur) on the bank of river Subarnarekha is a peculiar South Indian type of structure dates back to the 12th century. This is a Shiva temple with an unique Dwadasalinga (twelve sacred Lingas together) as the manifestation of the creative forces.
14.	Gaganeswar	Paschim Medinipur	Kurumbera fort
15.	Keshiary	Paschim Medinipur	Sarbamangala temple (constructed in the year of 1615) is a popular temple in Keshiary which was constructed following the Odishan style of traditional architecture. It attracts a large numbers of devotees

			throughout the year.
16.	Chandra kona	Paschim Medinipur	Chandrakona has a lot of beautiful temple with terracotta panel. Such as: • 'Malleswar Mahadev Temple' • 'Jaganath Mahadev Temple' • 'Santinath Mahadev Temple' • 'Parbatinath Mahadev Temple' • 'Raghunath Jiu Mandir' • 'Lal Jiu Mandir' • 'Laxmi-Janardan Temple' • 'Bhagavat Asram' • 'Udasini Math' • 'Khalsa Shiv Temple' (in Gobindapur area, 1865) • 'Satinath Mandir' (in Illambazar area) • 'Radhagobinda Mandir' (Chabri, 1970). • 'Raghunath Mandir' (Ghazipur).
17.	Karnagar	Paschim Medinipur	The place famous for its ancientness. Karnagar is the remains of an old fort i.e. remains of rampart, castle, temples, barracks and lakes.
18.	Chilkigarh	Paschim Medinipur	Chilkigarh (10 km from Jhargram) on the bank of river Dulung is famous for its palace and fort. Visit to the Kanakdurga temple within the forest is a lifetime experience for the visitors from urban settings. Chilkigarh is famous for the genesis of a special category of Chhau dance which is almost extinct today. With tourism, the tradition may again be revived.
19.	Laljal	Paschim Medinipur	An important excavation site (1982-83) under the supervision of West Bengasl State Archeology.
20.	Duarsini	Purulia	A small tribal village (28 km from Kuilapal) situated in the midst of the sal forest in the fringe of Dalma hills is a beautiful place. A temple of Duarsini, the tribal goddess is one of the attractions of the place.
21.	Balarampur	Purulia	Balarampur, a railhead, 45 km from Purulia town is identified as the ideal place in this circuit for developing accommodation facilities, and infrastructure for transport and amenities. It is the place where Chhau Dance Academy is situated. Being a town, it could provide better safety and security for the visitors. It is also a potential centre for Lac based tourism, an alternative tourism venture suitable for the area.
22.	Budhpur	Purulia	The remains of Buddhesvara temple of Odishan traditional architecture is the attraction of the Budhpur village (31 km from Balarampur). The stone carvings depict several deities such as Vishnu, Ganesa etc.
23.	Pakbira	Purulia	An ignored archaeological site (11 km from Budhpur) that bears the imprints of Jain sacredscape of ancient India is Pakbira (McCutchion, 2004). There are five stone made temples with beautiful wall decorations. The idols of Jain Tirthankar Shreyangsanath along with many other sculptures can be seen scattered here and there. A fund of Rs

			26 Lakh is however recently sanctioned by the Government of West Bengal for archaeological preservation of Jain heritage at Pakbira and Telkupi (Sengupta, 2013)
24.	Baghmundi	Purulia	It is a village (30 km from Murguma) with the palace of local landlords. The terracotta temple of Radhagobinda is situated in the palace premises along with the beautiful Pancharatna temple, Rasmancha and Shiva temple.
25.	Charida	Purulia	Charida is a roadside linear settlement (6 km from Baghmundi) famous for mask making which are used for the internationally renowned Chhau dance.
26.	Telkupi	Purulia	At Telkupi (30 km from Raghunathpur) on the Damodar, formerly a port is considered as a heritage tourism site with the ruins of ancient structures of Jain and Hindu traditions. About twenty two temples were found, some of which are submerged under the water of Panchet Reservoir.
27.	Cheliyama	Purulia	The beautiful temple of Radhabinod of the 17th century at Cheliyama (23 km from Raghunathpur) is famous for its outstanding terracotta panel.
28.	Banda	Purulia	A forested village (13 km from Cheliyama) in Raghunathpur block, Banda is another heritage tourism site with folk shrines.
29.	Garhpancha kot	Purulia	Garhpanchakot about 8 km from Telkupi, located at the foothills of Panchakot hills is developed by forest department as an ecotourism destination. This is also a heritage place with ruins of architectures built by the Panchakot royal family.
30.	Kashipur	Purulia	Kashipur (14 km from Raghunathpur) was the seat of Panchakot royal family. The king of Kashipur Nilmani Singha Dev initiated the Bhadu festival which grew into a very popular folk festival in this region.
31.	Chatna	Bankura	Very near to Susunia hills**,** Chatna is a historical place with its famous Basuli temple, a place of religion and heritage tourism attraction. It is 20 km only by road from Bankura town, the district headquarters which is suffering from various problems associated with urbanization. Development of Chatna as tourism hub is serving the purpose of saving Bankura from the pressure of tourists.
32.	Khirpai	Paschim Medinipur	There are a number of beautiful temples at Khirpai. Such as: • 'Radhamadhab Temple' (Pancharatna temple with terracotta works). The temple was built in 1817. • 'Kharageswar Shiv Temple'. The temple faces to the south and of Atchala style and is famous for its panel and terracotta works. It was built in 1861. • 'Umapati Shiv Mandir'. Atchala style mandir with panel and terracotta works.

			• 'Sitalanda Tin Temple' is situated in Hattala (Khirpai). The temple famous for its Atchala style and its terracotta works. • 'Dalan Mandir' is situated in Paharipara (Khirpai). It was built in 1746 probably the oldest temple of Khirpai region.
33.	Dahijuri	Paschim Medinipur	An agri-tourism initiatives taken in the village of Dahijuri (7 km from Jhargram) by a business house in the name of MPS Greenffort Resort which attained ISO certification and is offering the tourists luxury in while travelling in this circuit.
34.	Bhedia	Barddhaman	It is a place of archaeological importance in the Barddhaman district where several ancient architectural remnants including the remains of a fort with the evidence of broad roads, drainage facilities as well as different types of pots, crockery, rock sculptures, old coins etc have been found by the archaeologists.
35.	Mangalkat	Purba Barddhaman	It is a place of Barddhaman district from where a number of archaeological evidences of early civilization was discovered bearing Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim imprints. The Husen Shah mosque on a mound conceived as a Buddhist stupa has beautiful terracotta designs exhibiting Hindu and Buddhist motifs.
36.	Jairambati	Bankura	**:** In the eastern border of the region, Jairambati and adjacent Kamarpukur are centres of international tourism as the birth places of Sri Sri Sarodamoni Devi and her husband the great Sri Ramkrishna, the mission of whom is guiding the world intellect to purify the world in the essence of humanity hidden in the core of all religious philosophies.
37.	Ichai Ghosher Deul	Purba Barddhaman	Associated with history and folklore, the remains of the palace of Ichai Ghosh, the famous ruler mentioned in 'Mangal Kabya' (one of the early literatures of Bengal) in Barddhaman district is another site of attraction.

C. Religious Tourism resources:

Sl. No.	Name of the Tourist place	District	Significance
1.	Tarapith	Birbhum	Tarapith is a well known Satipith where the presiding deity is known as Tarini. It is believed that Eye boll of Sati fell here.
2.	Sainthia	Birbhum	At Sainthia, one of the Ekanna pith, resides Nandini. Part of Neck less of Sati fell here.
3.	Nalhati	Birbhum	Lalateswari is worshipped in this Satipith where her Fore Head is believed to fell.
4.	Bakreswar	Birbhum	Bakreshwar is considered as both natural and religious tourism destination but hundreds of devotees gathers here to pay their homage to

			Bakreshwar Siva and Mahisamardini. It is believed that Sati's Eye Brow fell here.
5.	Kankalitala	Birbhum	Kankalitala in Birbhum is another famous Satipith where She is known as Kankali. It is believed that Her Waist fell here.
6.	Labhpur	Birbhum	Labhpur in Birbhum district is another Satipith where Devi Phullara resides. The devotees believes that her Lips fell here.
7.	Khirgram	Purba Barddhaman	Khirgram in Barddhaman is considered as a sacred religious tourism destination. Sati is worshipped here as Devi Yogadya where her Hallux ("big toe" or "great toe") is believed to fell.
8.	Ketugram	Purba Barddhaman	Another Sati pith in Barddhaman district. Bahula is the worshipped deity here. It is believed that Sati's Left hand fell here.
9.	Dihar	Bankura	The Saileswar Temple
10.	Patharchapuri	Birbhum	Patharchapuri near Suri, the district headquarters of Birbhum is most popular among such shrines in Rarh Bengal. A *mazar* erected on the tomb of Dababa, a 19th century Sufi saint is the attraction of the place, for both Muslim and Hindu pilgrims. Folk beliefs on the divine and mystical power of this *Pir* are the motivations of such pilgrimage which is now both domestic and international. Throughout the year, hundreds of devotees come here every day to pray in the *mazar* for the fulfilment of their wishes.
11.	Malancha	Paschim Medinipur	Malancha is famous for its temples. Some of them are: • 'Dakshina Kali Mandir' (Brick-built and Atchala formation and also terracotta ornamentation) built in 1634. • 'Nandeswar Shiv Temple' (built with laterite in 1719). • 'Siddheswari Mandir'. • 'Balaji Mandir'. • The temple of 'Kharageswar Mahadev'.
12.	Medinipur	Paschim Medinipur	A huge number of Muslim gathers at the famous Jora Masjid (Twin Mosque) of Medinipur city (in Southern Rarh), the headquarter town of district Paschim Medinipur every year on 15th-18th February to commemorate the death of their beloved Pir Sahib- Murshed Ali Al Kaderi Al Baghdadi. Thousands of devotees both domestic and international (mainly from Bangladesh and other Arab countries), shows their heartfelt devotion to his tomb and participates in many religious rituals. One of the largest Muslim gatherings in West Bengal takes place in here.
13.	Jagannathpur	Bankura	Temple of Ratneswar
14.	Bahulara	Bankura	A century old Saiva temple

15.	Ekteswar	Bankura	This place is quite famous for the presence of Ekteswara Siva temple. In this temple which was made following the Odishan Pirha deul style, one can find the well known Siva lingam which is believed to be a 'Swayambhu Lingam' (meaning self formed phallic emblem of the Lord Siva). This temple is considered a very sacred Saiva pitha that attracts a large numbers of devotees throughout the year. (Bezbaruah, 2003).
16.	Birchandrapur	Birbhum	Presently known as Birchandrapur after the name of Birchandra, the son of Nityananda, a Vaishnavite leader and partner of Sri Chaitanya, this place is much older as revealed from folklore. At a place called Pandavtala, the Pandavas of the Mahabharata, the great Indian epic have taken shelter during their exile On the very place where Nityananda was born, a temple is erected called 'Sootika Mandir'. There is pond nearby through which, it is said, Nityanada disappeared (Bezbaruah, 2003). Considering it as a 'yogapitha', Vaishnavites visit the place for pilgrimage. In honour of Nityananda, a fair of seven days is held in the place in the Bengali month *Kartik* (October-November) on the eve of Goshthashtami.
17.	Gopiballavpur	Paschim Medinipur	About 11 km from Hatibari, Gopiballavpur is the seat of Vaishnavaism in Rarh Bengal where Dandamahatsav is celebrated every year in the month of May with the assemblage of a large number of devotees. The historical Nabaratna temple of Gopiballavpur is the manifestation of the cultural relationship between Odisha and Bengal in the field of religion and culture.
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So, it is evident that the Rarh region is well endowed with lots of tourism resources. The region has a huge potentiality to develop a profitable tourism industry using its attractive

tourism products and if tourism development is guided in a sustainable way, it can revitalize the overall economy of this backward area without causing any harm to the environment of the tourism resources.